

September 30, 2014

Sydney Zaremba  
Witness Statement

My statement is not just for my wonderful Mom, Helene Zaremba, who we lost as a result of the greed of Farid Fata, but for all victims and families who have been affected by this horrible wrongdoing by a person who we should have been able to trust. The doctor.

My mother had Stage 1, Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma, Non-Hodgkin's disease, with only 1 tumor and no Bone Marrow involvement. We were advised by Farid Fata that my mom's disease was very treatable and potentially curative. You can imagine how wonderful my mom, sister and I felt about knowing that she might be better by Christmas and maybe even cured. When we mentioned a second opinion, Fata told us we really didn't have time as this was a very aggressive cancer and waiting would mean it could potentially spread. The next week she began her chemo treatments.

My mother was 87 and only 104 lbs. when she started treatment, but very healthy and rarely took any medication other than an aspirin or vitamins. She was a nurse in her own professional life. She enjoyed senior living and had her own 2 bedroom apartment in independent living in Rochester. She was in the choir, attended exercise class 5 times per week, enjoyed all the outings they went on and loved her family, friends and life. By her 3rd chemo treatment she had a severe rash and began getting infections. The chemo continued with no pre-chemo visit to Fata. He always saw her the week after her chemo.

She became more and more ill and though we inquired about stopping her chemo, he continued. Fata was highly touted by other doctors and since we had no previous experience with cancer of this kind, we trusted him and that he knew what he was doing. He also continued to prescribe various medications.

Mom was shocked at how ill she got and by October, she needed 24 hour care and could not tell which daughter was which. She could barely breathe and had to be on oxygen the last two weeks of her life. The woman who never took a pill was prescribed 16 pills per day on Fata's watch and her life was being taken away day by day. Our mom was gone in 3 months.

I can never have my mother back again, but by imposing the permanent revocation of licenses of those committing these fraudulent, deceitful and damaging acts upon others for financial gain, I'm sure a light will go on, minimizing the risk for these activities and saving the lives of the vulnerable. This would serve as a guarantee that those who commit this wrongdoing would never be able to harm anyone again through the licensed practice of medicine. By ensuring that the perpetrators license would never be reinstated, it will also make those entertaining these illegal behaviors think twice before acting.

We need to ensure that there is protection for the patient should the medical professional be taking advantage of them. I myself would like to see two things. First, annual or bi-annual audits of the billing practices of all medical professionals. This should not be the fox guarding the henhouse, but a reputable source conducting the process. I'm not sure if this is being done, but from all the cases of convicted fraud listed on the Department of Justice website, it does not appear to be happening. Think of the millions (perhaps billions) of dollars that could be saved. While expense would be incurred to invoke this process, I would much rather see the money going to the practice of auditing rather than lining some crooks pocket.

Next, in all medical offices and in those facilities working with the elderly or vulnerable I would like to see posted signs indicating a phone number to call if the patient/client feels that are not receiving appropriate treatment. This would further remind those working with the sick and wounded or weak of the ethical obligations of their position.

Again, this will never bring our wonderful, beautiful, loving mom back to us, but perhaps those affected by Fata including victims and victims' families can find a bit of justice through changes to this legislation.